
Cremation

In Manchester and Elsewhere.



BY

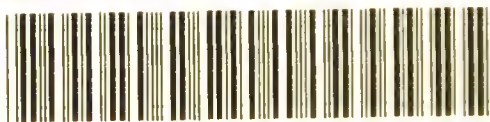
J. HARVEY SIMPSON,

Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium.

SECOND EDITION.

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Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium.



SECOND EDITION.

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CREMATION

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CHAPTER I.



Methods of Burial.

How to get rid of the dead was naturally one of the earliest problems presented to mankind for solution. Primeval man most likely disposed of his dead by carrying them into the woods, or leaving them elsewhere above ground, a prey to animals of all kinds ; afterwards perhaps a sprinkling of earth would be placed over the body ; then later a hole would be dug in the ground for the reception of the body ; until at last we come to the present method of interment, with the undertaker's masterpiece—the solid oak coffin with inner shell and massive ornaments—constructed to preserve the body, instead of to dissolve the body as nature intended.

The disposal of the dead has been attempted in various ways, of which we may instance the following :—

1. Ordinary interment in the ground, to which perhaps there would be little objection if—

- (a) The person died a natural death from old age and decay ;

- (b) The receptacle for the body were of a fragile nature ;
- (c) The character of the soil were such as to dissolve the constituents of the body speedily ;
- (d) So long as the earth was sparsely populated and villages few and far between.

But at the present day the conditions are entirely different.

- (a) The majority of persons die from causes other than natural decay and old age.
- (b) Coffins are no longer constructed of a fragile nature.

The word *coffin* is from the Greek *Χοφινος*, a wicker basket.

The natural process is to dissolve the body, but the present day monstrosities misnamed "coffins" preserve the body or delay the dissolution in a most dangerous and disgusting manner.

- (c) The majority of soils are distinctly not favourable for a speedy dissolution of the body, and where favourable such soil is very properly required for very different purposes than the reception of dead bodies.
- (d) The large growth of populous places compels every thinking person to admit that the question as to the most correct form of burial has become one of the pressing problems of the day.

2. Embalmmment was, as we know, a once popular method of burial amongst the ancient Egyptians, consequent upon one of the central

tenets of their religion, viz., the physical resurrection of the dead.

The result being now—

- (a) The delight of the archæologist ;
- (b) The decoration of our museums ;
- (c) Fuel for the modern Arab.

3. Entombment, mentioned so frequently in the Holy Scriptures.

4. The Parsee method. Their silent towers, wherein they throw their dead to be eaten by birds of prey.

To the Parsee, fire is an embodiment of the Deity; a dead body is to them a vile and offensive thing; fire is too holy and precious to be contaminated by a dead body.

The ordinary Englishman, on the contrary, believes the putrefying body to be holy and precious and fire to be vile.

5. Incineration or cremation.

Shakespeare truly says :—

And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot ;
And thereby hangs a tale.



CHAPTER II.

The History of Cremation.

CREMATION took its origin in the first stages of human culture.

The Vedic creed in India made it a general precept. Amongst the Teutons there existed a similar law.

Norse literature is full of it in many passages of the Edda, the Hemskringla, and kindred works of a mythological, historical, or mixed character.

It is recorded in the Hemskringla :—

That the Fire Burial Age had been preceded by a “Mound Age”—that is, by an era during which bodies were simply inhumed in a tumulus or mound.

Odin, the leader of a war clan, introduced cremation into Norseland. He ordained that the dead should be burned, and that everything which had been theirs should be carried to the funeral pyre and also burnt. And this custom is even at the present time carried out by certain gipsy tribes.

Odin's law was kept in the north for many centuries, until the Asic creed fell before the new faith.

The relics of the Bronze Age have produced to us urns filled with human cremated remains.

In Tacitus' *Germania* we read of the quietude of their cremations, in contradistinction to the magnificent and costly cremations of the Gauls.

In Russia, also, fire burial was once an almost universal practice. An Arab ambassador once wrote a graphic description of the funeral rites in Russia. He said: "You Arabs are fools; you take the person whom you must have loved and honoured and place him in the earth, where vermin and worms devour him; we Russians, on the contrary, burn him in a twinkling, and he goes at once to the heavenly abode."

Incineration was practised in India since the most remote ages.

The people of Burmah cremate their rich dead and inhume the poor or carry them to a stream.

In Siam cremation is a universal custom, and it is an established and time-honoured usage in Japan. The followers of Confucius and those of the Shinto doctrine are, however, averse to cremation.

At the commencement of the Christian era cremation was almost universal, but with the spread of Christianity cremation amongst Europeans fell into disuse, the principal reason being that it was considered repugnant to the doctrine of the Resurrection.

We first hear of modern cremation through a Jesuit father, Le Grand d'Aussy, who brought the question before the Institute of France in 1790, the result being that a few years later the American ambassador to Paris was cremated in South Carolina, in the presence of his family and slaves. In 1820 the poet Shelley, having been drowned on the shores of Italy, his body was cremated at

Via Reggio in the presence of his friends Trelawney, Hunt, and Byron.

In 1866 practical experiments were made in Italy, and in 1869, at a medical international congress held in Vienna, the matter was specifically brought forward and advocated.

Modern cremation, in England, was introduced by Sir Henry Thompson in an article published in the *Contemporary Review*, January 1874, the result being the formation of the "Cremation Society of England" in 1875.



CHAPTER III.

Cremation in Ancient Greece and Rome.

CREMATION spread to Europe from India. In old tombs on the Island of Malta urns containing human ashes have been found. Of the Thracians, Herodotus relates that they exhibited the corpse publicly for three days, brought many offerings, and bewailed the deceased. At the termination of that period they burnt the body and interred the ashes and bones.

From Asia, by way of Thrace, cremation probably reached Greece. We read of the death of Heracles, how he ascended Mount Cæta, raised a pile of wood, placed himself upon it, and ordered it to be set on fire. No one ventured to obey him until at length Pœas, the shepherd, who passed by, was prevailed upon to comply with the request of the suffering hero. When the pile was burning, a cloud descended from heaven, and amid peals of thunder carried him into Olympus, where he was honoured with immortality.

In the works of Homer, preserved for us in immortal verse, we find many instances of cremation chronicled. Andromache says :—

Alas ! what one survives to be my refuge, one black
day bereft by stern Achilles ; by his hand my
father breathed his last ;

And all in fire he burned him complete armed.

Pallas says :—

His body I'll resign to be disposéd by his friends in
flamy funerals :

And honoured with erected tomb.

And then again :—

Priam commanded—none should mourn,
But in still silence yield their honoured carcasses to fire.
And only grieve in heart.

Homer's narrative of the burning of Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, is as follows :—

They who had the dead in charge remained and heaped
the wood and built a pyre a hundred feet each
way from side to side :
With soreful hearts they raised and laid the corpse
upon the summit.
Then they flayed and dressed before it many fatlings
of the flock,
And oxen with curved feet and crookéd horns.
From these magnanimous, Achilles took the fat,
And covered with it carefully from head to foot.
Beside the bier and leaning toward it, jars of honey
and oil he placed,
And flung, with many a deep-drawn sigh,
Twelve high-necked steeds upon the pile.
Nine hounds there were, which from the tables of the
rich were daily fed.
Of these Achilles struck the heads from two, and laid
them on the wood.
And after these, and last, twelve gallant sons of the
brave Trojans,
Butchered by the sword ; for he was bent on evil.
To the pile he put the iron violence of fire,
And, wailing, called by name the friend he loved.

* * * * *

They quenched with dark red wine the pyre
Where'er the flames had spread.
And where lay the deep ashes,
Then, with many tears, gathered the white bones of
their gentle friend,
And laid them in a golden vase ;
Wrapped round with caul, a double fold,
Within the tents they laid them softly wrapped in
delicate lawn ;
Then drew a circle for the sepulchre,
And, laying the foundations to enclose the pyre,
They heaped the earth, and,
Having reared a mound, withdrew.

The body of Achilles was burnt and his ashes deposited in a golden urn.

Odysseus was burnt on Mount Perge.

Paris, who gave rise to the Trojan war, was also cremated.

Hector, the chiefest hero of the Trojans, was cremated, and his ashes placed in a tomb at Huim.

The ashes of Ajax were deposited in a golden urn, and deposited on Mount Rhoeteion.

Many of the celebrated men of Greece were cremated.

Solon, the celebrated Athenian legislator, was cremated, and his ashes scattered round the Island of Salamis. The Greeks had become very extravagant in their funerals, and he had ordained that the rites should be simplified.

Amongst others cremated were—

Alcibiades.....	B.C.	404
Timoleon	,,	337
Phocion.....	,,	317

Phocion was an Athenian general and statesman, and, dying in disgrace, his friends were obliged to hire a man, who was in the habit of undertaking such services, to burn him.

The tragedy of love in which Æneas was involved ended with the suicide of Dido, who cremated herself.

Philopœmen, one of the few great men whom Greece produced in the decline of her political independence, died B.C. 183. His body was burnt with great pomp, and his remains conveyed to Megalopolis in solemn procession. The urn which contained the ashes was carried by the historian

Polybius, and was received by his grateful fellow-citizens with the bitterest sorrow.

In concluding the sketch of cremation in ancient Greece, it may be noted that so late as A.D. 165 one Peregrinus Proteus, a cynic philosopher, publicly burned himself at the Olympic games.

Self-cremation seems to have been one of the favourite means of disposing of one's self in ancient times, especially among royalty and the aristocracy.

Sardanapalus, the last king of the Assyrians, burned himself in B.C. 600. Œnone, the wife of Paris, immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her husband.

Cremation was practised also in Macedon. Alexander the Great and Craterus, one of his generals, were both cremated. Pausanius, in the bodyguard of King Philip, and Hephæstion, a friend of Alexander the Great, were also cremated.

The ancient Etruscans practised cremation, adopting it from the Greeks, who were first their rulers and afterwards their close neighbours.

The ancient Latins borrowed the practice from the Etruscans. Some cinerary urns found in the neighbourhood of Alba Longa tend to show that the custom of burning the dead was current among the original population of Latium.

Upon the Latins becoming the founders of Rome they probably introduced cremation in their new home.

Ovid affirms that the body of Remus was committed to the flames.

The Romans at all times attached great importance to the burial of their dead, consequent

upon that worship in Rome which perhaps held the deepest hold upon their imagination :—

Ancestor worship, or the worship of the tutelary spirits that presided in and over the household and the store chamber.

These were :—

In public worship—Vesta and the Penates.

In private worship—Lares, the gods of the household ; Manes, the deified souls of the departed, who continued to exist as shades, haunting the spot where their remains reposed.

Cremation must have been fairly popular in Rome for some considerable period before B.C. 450, as in that year the law of the Twelve Tables was promulgated, under which regulations were made both in regard to cremation and also interment, simplifying the mode of procedure. The following is a description of a funeral in those days :—

1. The body lay in state for seven days, thus giving time for the furnishing of the spirit with a new body, for its progress onward into other existences.

2. On the day appointed the funeral train wended its way to the Forum, the body of the deceased being made to stand upon the tribunal, that it might be visible to all.

3. The citizens stood round in a circle, when a funeral oration in praise of the deceased was delivered.

4. From the Forum the corpse was carried in procession to the place of burning or interment, which was required to be outside the city.

5. The corpse was burnt on a pile of wood, built in the form of an altar, with four equal sides, such sides being rough and unpolished.

6. On the top of the pile the corpse was laid, with the couch on which it had been carried, and the nearest relative then set fire to the pyre with his face turned away.

7. When the flames began to arise various perfumes were thrown on the flames, also cups of oil, ornaments,

clothes, dishes of food, and other things which were supposed to be agreeable to the deceased.

8. When the pile was burnt down, the embers were soaked with wine, and the ashes of the deceased were gathered by the nearest relatives, who sprinkled them with perfumes and placed them in the urn.

9. These urns were made of gold, marble, silver, porphyry, baked clay, bronze, or glass of all forms and sizes, upon them being usually an inscription or epitaph.

In B.C. 241 Sicily became a Roman province, of which country we read that in B.C. 289 Agathocles, King of Sicily, being poisoned, caused himself to be placed on the funeral pyre and burnt whilst still alive.

During these periods it is difficult to trace the popularity of cremation in Rome, since the censors and prætors held authority for so brief a period that almost universally their deaths are unreported.

In B.C. 200 the Consul Lævinus, who died in his year of office, was cremated.

On the other hand, in B.C. 183, Scipio Africanus was interred in his family sepulchre, and it is understood that none of his family were ever cremated.

In B.C. 115 the Consul Metellus, who was distinguished by his noble birth, his military glory, and the high political offices which he had held, was carried to the funeral pyre by his four sons, whom he had lived to see rise to the highest honours of the state.

At this period commenced the custom of building the tombs on the Via Appia in imitation of a funeral pyre, the Via Appia being the fashionable burial-place of Rome. One vast square, surrounded by a broad wall, has been identified as a public

cremating ground used alike by rich and poor. A similar cremating square has also been discovered in the ruins of Pompeii.

In B.C. 78 occurred the death of the celebrated Sulla. It is interesting to read a description of his funeral :—

“Italy never witnessed a grander funeral solemnity. In every place through which the deceased was borne in regal attire, the inhabitants, and above all his old soldiers, joined the mourning train. So the endless procession reached the capitol, where the courts kept holiday and all business was suspended. Sulla, faithful to the usage of the Cornelian house, had ordered that his body should be interred without being burnt. But, by command of the Senate, the corpse of the man who had disturbed the bones of Marius was committed to the flames. Headed by all the magistrates and the whole senate, by the priests and priestesses in their official robes, and by the band of noble youths in equestrian armour, the procession arrived at the great market-place. At this spot, filled with his achievements and almost by the sound as yet of his dreaded words, the funeral oration was then delivered. From thence the bier was borne on the shoulders of senators to the Campus Martius, where the funeral pyre had been erected. While the flames were blazing the equites and foot soldiers held their race of honour round the corpse. The ashes of the Regent were deposited beside the tombs of the old kings.”

In B.C. 44, being the year after he was made Dictator, Julius Cæsar was murdered. A description of his funeral is given in the play :—

We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.

In B.C. 43 the Consul Tertius was burnt on the field of Mars. It is interesting to note that the company of contractors for funerals refused any recompense for their services, in consequence of the high esteem in which the Romans had held him.

In B.C. 30 Octovianus became sole ruler of the Roman world, under the title of Cæsar Augustus. He pronounced the funeral orations on the bodies of the Consul Marcellus, Agrippa, and Octavia, his wife, in each case the bodies being burnt.

And now occurred, perhaps, the golden age of cremation, when rich and poor alike resorted to the practice, although it must be admitted that cremation never became universal amongst the Romans, as certain noble families always resorted to the custom of ordinary interment.

There can be seen the remains of the tomb of the "servants of the Cæsars," or the officers of Cæsar's household, in the Vigua Codini, just within the Porta Appia. This celebrated tomb is full of cinerary urns and busts of the dead. The tomb is of peculiar interest because some of the inscriptions, now preserved in the Capitoline Museum, are those of persons mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistles. Dr. Lightfoot has shown that some of these are not common names, but may probably be the identical persons mentioned by St. Paul among the "officers of Cæsar's household." If this is correct, it would tend to show that the earliest Christians followed the then usual method of burial, and did not object to the burning of the body.

In A.D. 37 Cæsar Augusta was cremated, the funeral oration being delivered by Caligula, who in A.D. 41 was murdered. His body was half burned and covered over with light turf. His sisters on

their return from exile had the remains completely burned and then buried. We read that in A.D. 65 Sabina Poppæ died, and her body was not burnt "according to the Roman custom," but embalmed and deposited in the sepulchre of the Julii.

Here we find a commencement of Egyptian ideas spreading, and, with several Oriental forms of religion, Rome added to her worship those of Isis and Mythras, the adherents of these new religions giving up cremation and interring their dead in sarcophagi.

In A.D. 65 the body of Seneca, the philosopher, was burnt, but without ceremony, in accordance with specific directions left by him in his will.

In A.D. 117 the Emperor Trajan died in Cecilia, where his body was burnt, and the remains brought to Rome in a golden urn and deposited under the column which bears his name.

It is interesting to note that in A.D. 211 the Emperor Severus was cremated at York, his ashes being brought to Rome and deposited in the tomb of Marcus Aurelius.

A minute search does not carry the practice of cremation amongst the Roman emperors further than A.D. 238, when we find that in that year the Emperor Maximinus was cremated in the Campus Martius. We may therefore say that cremation fell into disuse by the commencement of the fourth century. According to Marobius, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth century, cremation had not been resorted to for some considerable time. It may be remembered that Constantine became Roman emperor A.D. 313, and during the later years of his life Christianity became the state religion, the pagan temples were closed, and sacrifices forbidden.

CHAPTER IV.

Cremation and Religion.

IN advocating what is apparently a radical change in relation to one of the most solemn customs of mankind, viz., the dealing with the remains of one who was probably most beloved and dear to us. the inherent conservatism of human nature protests most strongly against any change whatever in what is considered the recognised method, and easily persuades itself that cremation is atheistic and irreligious, but the voice of reason afterwards appeals to common-sense and the actual facts. Is this proposed change in our method of burial one which will tend to lessen our hold on general religious principles? Dr. A. Duccellatti, a catholic priest and Professor of Theology at the University of Pavia, one of the most learned ecclesiastics of Italy, in a letter to Professor Polli, at Milano, has said :—

You enquire of me in what relation cremation stands to religion. As a reasoning catholic. free from any prejudice, I do not hesitate for a moment to openly declare that cremation, as you and your colleagues understand it, is not inconsistent with the teachings of religion.

But the Roman Catholic Church is averse to cremation. In 1886 his Holiness the Pope promul-

gated a Decree in which he stated that cremation was a detestable abuse, and it was not lawful for any Roman Catholic to leave orders for cremation. In 1894 this Decree was slightly modified by an order, that with the special consent of the Bishop of the diocese, a religious service might be held over the body of a deceased person before cremation, but not afterwards. The objections to cremation from the Roman Catholic view were given some years ago by Cardinal Vaughan, the present Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and lately by Father Hetherington, of Glasgow. They are as follows :—

- 1 It is a revival of a Pagan system.

Earth burial is the continuation of a system also resorted to by Pagans.

2. It is anti-Christian and anti-Biblical.

Cremation is not advocated in the Bible, neither is it condemned. As a matter of fact we find several instances of cremations recorded there.

- 1 Samuel xxxi. 12. The cremation of the bodies of Saul and his sons at Jabesh.

- 2 Chronicles xvi. 14. Asa was cremated.

Amos vi. 10.

The practice of cremation has not one single reason in the Scriptures for its rejection.

3. Earth burial was consecrated in a most special manner in the person of Christ, and therefore the Roman Church looked upon

interment as the true Christian mode of burial.

But as a matter of fact Christ was *not* interred, but entombed, in accordance with the custom of his times; to be consistent the Bishop should enforce entombment on all his flock.

4. If the body were to be *annihilated* by cremation, faith in the doctrine of the Resurrection would grow weaker and weaker, and would eventually disappear. And this argument was supported by the late Bishop Wordsworth, who said: "Some weak-minded brethren might have their belief shaken in the doctrine of the Resurrection." Also by the present Bishop of Chichester, who has said: "Cremation appeared to ignore one of the most fundamental articles of the Christian faith—the Resurrection of the body."

In reply, one can first of all say that nature recognises no such thing as annihilation. There is simply a change in the constituent elements of the body, and that occurs whether cremation is resorted to or ordinary interment. In the former case quickly, in the latter case slowly,—the result in the end being the same.

The late Lord Shaftesbury said in reply to Bishop Wordsworth:—

What an audacious limitation of the power of the Almighty. What has become of the blessed martyrs who were burned at the stake?

Canon Liddon said :—

The resurrection of the body from its ashes is not a greater miracle than the resurrection of an unburnt body. Each must be purely miraculous.

Bishop Fraser said :—

No intelligent faith can suppose that any Christian doctrine is affected by the manner in which or the time in which this mortal body of ours crumbles into dust and sees corruption.

Bishop Moorhouse says :—

The choice between cremation and earth burial has no connection with Christian doctrine.

The Archbishop of York has lately said :—

I think the question of cremation is a very serious and difficult one, and I know of no nation that ever worshipped the true God who were ever in the habit of cremating their dead.

Surely the Archbishop should remember “other times, other manners.” Are we to be bound by Jewish and Christian tradition in matters not involving an article of faith? What would be the position of the civilised world to-day if such an argument had been allowed to have weight when it was deemed requisite to alter a Biblical tradition?

Canon Swayne has said :—

Without *burial* St. Paul’s most suggestive analogy between the dead body and the sown seed would be practically effaced from the New Testament.

But cremation does not involve the loss of burial.

And as Canon Liddon said :—

Whatever may be the idea of the spiritual body which is sown a natural body but raised in incorruption, this belief cannot be influenced in any conceivable manner by the question whether the natural body is burnt, or buried, or drowned, or eaten by wild beasts.

And Bishop Moorhouse says :—

We have no basis to encourage the degrading superstition that every particle of matter which is interred in the grave will be raised again; nor do I believe St. Paul intended that such a construction should be placed upon his words.

The Grand Rabbi, M. Zodac Kahn, says :—

I have seen nothing in the Bible which forbids a mode of burial other than that of placing the body in the ground. It follows that the idea of cremation, which is not forbidden by the Bible, does not seem to be repugnant.

We believe, also, in the resurrection of the body, but I do not see in what the idea of cremation is opposed to this belief.

Since there is complete decomposition of the body after death, whether the molecules of the body appear in dust, in plants, in the earth, or in ashes, what difference? God will have no more difficulty in raising the one than the other.

Chas. W. Wendte, Oakland, Cal., Superintendent Unitarian Churches for the Pacific Coast, says :—

The true disposal of our dead is cremation rather than earth burial. It is associated with

feelings of the noblest kind, with veneration and tenderness for the departed, with the religious trusts and hopes that centre in the thought of immortality.

It does not contradict Christian teachings, or compel the alteration of a single line of the burial service. It conduces far more than the usual practice of interment to the comfort, health, and safety of the living. For this reason it is commended by all sanitary authorities and men of science. It is also far less offensive to the imagination and feelings of man. Finally, it is recommended by considerations of utility and economy. For these and many other reasons it should be adopted.

Rev. J. Andrews Harris, Philadelphia, says :—

I am perfectly willing to go on record for myself individually, and have no hesitation in saying that from almost every point of view, and chiefly from a sanitary point of view, I regard incineration preferable to earth burial. It accomplishes in an hour or two precisely the same results as require years by the rotting process, and accomplishes those results, according to my way of thinking, in a more satisfactory way. The only so-called theological objections which I have heard urged against incineration have appeared to me without any weight, and some of them have a fair title to be called absurd. It is an honourable, reverent, and cleanly disposition of the bodies of the dead ; it is a vast protection to the bodies of the living in ways which every sanitarian knows perfectly well.

The Rev. R. Heber Newton, D.D., New York, says :—

I am glad of an opportunity of expressing my interest in the work of cremation. For many years I have thoroughly believed in cremation on a variety of grounds. Having tried to make my life one of usefulness to my fellows, I object to the possibility of injuring any one after I am dead. The thought that what I cannot take away with me to a higher form of life is to be left as a means of poisoning life is abhorrent to me. I prefer that my body shall be so disposed of as to put this out of the question. The religious objection has always been nonsensical to my mind. Believing thoroughly in a life to come, I have not the slightest notion of that higher life being conditioned in any possible way by the way in which we get into it. Nothing but the stupid prejudice of a blind orthodoxy could allow any notion of this kind to have weight. In so far as it does have weight, it ought to be exposed and ridiculed. I have also for years had the intensest horror of thinking of anyone dear to me undergoing the noxious process of decomposition, as we have made sure that it shall be made noxious by our whole mode of interment. I want those that I love to pass from this life to a higher life without any such abhorrent decomposition of the form once dear to me.

On every hand cremation has commended itself to my judgment, and I am sure that it is destined to prevail in the future. I expect to be disposed of thus myself, and do not know of any expression of opinion which I could offer that could have more weight than this.

We are of opinion that the objection to cremation raised by the Vatican is one of internal Italian politics and not of universal Christendom. Young Italy took up the idea of cremation enthusiastically, therefore the Roman Church objected to it. Elsewhere no Christian church has raised its voice against cremation, and at the present day it is admitted on all sides that religion should not enter into the question of cremation at all.



CHAPTER V.

Cremation and the Medico-Legal Difficulty.

AT the time when Sir Henry Thompson published his article upon cremation in the *Contemporary Review* in 1874, the newspapers of the country, from the *Times* downwards, were flooded with letters from persons who were under the impression that the use of cremation would augment very considerably the number of deaths by poisoning, and for a time it was somewhat difficult to answer this objection fully. But, fortunately, on 20th March 1893 the following resolution was passed by the House of Commons :—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the sufficiency of the existing Law as to the Disposal of the Dead for securing an accurate record of the Causes of Death in all cases, and especially for detecting them where death may have been due to poison, violence, or criminal neglect.

Committee nominated—[Monday, 27th March 1893]—of—

Mr. Arch.
Mr. Brookfield.
Dr. Cameron.
Dr. Farquharson.
Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Hozier.

Mr. Heywood Johnstone.
Sir Thomas Lea.
Mr. MacNeil.
Sir Stafford Northcote.
Sir Henry Roscoe.

The report of the Committee, with the evidence taken by them, has been printed, and can be purchased for 3s. 4d. It contains no less than 350 pages, and is most valuable as proving the present defects in death certification, and generally in regard to the disposal of the dead. Of course it is impossible in the short space at our disposal to give other than very limited extracts from the same.

The following paragraphs are copied from such report :—

Your Committee are of opinion that the witnesses examined may be regarded as adequately representing the views of those who are concerned for or are interested in the working of the law relating to death certification and registration, and it is satisfactory to state that in the main the evidence discloses practical agreement as to the defects in the law and the amendments in it which are necessary to secure the result which your Committee have in view.

DEFECTS OF THE EXISTING LAW.

Differences of detail exist in the different divisions of the kingdom with respect to the law of registration of death and the disposal of the dead, but the same principle underlies it in each of them—namely, that intimation of any death must be given to the local registrar, together with a certificate as to the cause of death from the medical man who attended deceased during his last illness, and that when no registered medical practitioner has been in attendance, the registrar shall fill up the details on such information as he can obtain from surviving friends, or, in case of sudden, violent, or suspicious deaths, shall report the

case to the coroner, or in Scotland to the procurator fiscal, who, after inquiry, shall order registration.

Those deaths concerning which a certificate of a registered medical practitioner has been received, or concerning which a coroner after inquest, or a procurator fiscal after inquiry reports the cause are classified as *certified* deaths, whilst those concerning the cause of which there is no such testimony are classed as *uncertified*.

Now, so far as affording a record of the true cause of death, and the detection of it in cases where death may have been due to violence, poison, or criminal neglect is concerned, the class of certified deaths leaves much to be desired. According to Dr. Ogle, for example, the official in charge of Vital Statistics in the Office of the Registrar-General for England, a practice exists among a certain class of medical practitioners of giving death certificates on forms specially printed for their own use, and in which all mention of attendance is omitted, the object being to enable the practitioner to give death certificates in cases which he has never attended in life. "A woman," he said, "let us suppose, has made away with her infant. All she has to do is to go to one of these doctors, tell him that her child has died of convulsions, give him a small fee, and get a certificate which will enable her to register the death and to get the child buried without any risk of inquiry."

Again, Dr. Glaister, of Glasgow, informed the Committee that he "saw no difficulty for anybody to perpetrate a crime, get the whole

matter certified and registered, and the body buried without anybody detecting it."

Among the class of certified deaths are to be found many deaths attended by unqualified assistants, and certified by qualified practitioners who may never have seen the cases; deaths certified by medical practitioners who have not seen the patient for weeks or months prior to death, and who only know by hearsay of death having occurred; and deaths in which the true cause is suppressed in deference to the feelings of survivors. Such cases are numerous, but in addition evidence was given as to cases accidentally brought to light of deaths registered, with a view to insurance or other frauds, of persons afterwards discovered in some cases to have been murdered, and in other cases to be still alive; deaths registered under circumstances suggestive of fraud, regarding which it was not known whether the subjects had or had not died; and coffins buried, alleged to contain corpses, the deaths of which had not been registered, and concerning which all that is known is that no such persons as those alleged to have been buried had died at the address given to the burial authorities. Details will be found later on in the analysis of the evidence.

CASES REPORTED TO THE CORONER.

Under the regulations issued by the Registrar General for registrars of births and deaths, a registrar is directed in every case of violent or sudden death, or where the circumstances are suspicious, and whenever the cause of death is said to be "unknown," to report the same to the coroner before registering such death, in

order that he may decide whether an inquest is necessary. The coroner is, however, not necessarily put in motion by the registrar. In fact, he receives information as to cases which appear to require investigation from all sources, viz., registrars, medical men, friends of the deceased, strangers, neighbours, and sometimes the police.

The only person, however, upon whom the duty is imposed of deciding whether there are suspicions in any case, and if so, of referring it to the coroner, is the registrar, and it may be doubted whether he is always a competent person for the discharge of such a responsible duty.

The following instances of ludicrous verdicts may be quoted as illustrations of the nature of some inquiries :—

Dr. Ogle says :—

One verdict came before me a little time ago, which was this : “ A man died from stone in the kidney, which stone he swallowed when lying on a gravel path in a state of drunkenness.” That was given as a verdict. I thought some joke had been played, and I wrote down about it, and found it was an absolute fact.

Another one is this : “ Child, three months old, found dead, but no evidence whether born alive.”

It would appear that, in some cases, owing to the failure of the coroner to take medical evidence, he is not in a position to include in the verdict a statement of the cause of death, even if he desired to do so. A coroner's

jury is empowered to order a post-mortem examination of a body if they think it necessary, but usually they are very much guided by the coroner in this matter, and are disinclined to take a course which may be opposed to his wishes.

THE BURIAL CERTIFICATE.

Upon registration of a death the registrar is required to give to the person informing him of the death (the qualified informant) a certificate, which is the authority for the burial of the body to which it relates. This certificate is to be handed to the person who buries or performs any funeral or religious service for the burial of the deceased. Burial may, however, take place without the production of any burial certificate or coroner's order, but in such a case the person officiating at the funeral is required to give notice in writing to the registrar within seven days.

Although failure on the part of the responsible person to give notice of such a burial to the registrar renders him liable to a penalty of £10, it appears that cases occur in which such notice is not given to the registrar, the result being that the death may escape registration. Apparently efforts are rarely made to check this laxity by taking legal proceedings to recover the penalty of £10, as the registration authorities usually appear to be satisfied with an expression of regret, and a promise to be more careful in future.

Several witnesses who have appeared before your Committee have expressed the opinion that under no circumstances should a body be

disposed of, by burial or otherwise, without the production of a burial certificate from the registrar, and that it should be made a penal offence to dispose of a body in the absence of such a certificate.

Your Committee fully concur in these opinions. The object to be kept in view in an efficient registration system is in the opinion of your Committee that burial should not take place until the cause of death has been recorded upon satisfactory medical evidence, and the burial certificate should be issued only upon the submission of such evidence to the registrar.

As illustrating the importance of requiring the production of a burial certificate in connection with any body that it is sought to dispose of, the following passage from the evidence of a clerk to a Burial Board may be quoted :—

You do not want a certificate to bury a body; you can dispose of a body in the London Cemetery without any certificate at all. If any gentleman here was murdered, to put it plainly, and you had a queer undertaker to dispose of that body, he could dispose of it without anyone being any the wiser.

How could he dispose of it?—I will give you an instance. Say I am an undertaker, and I have got the body of a man named William Smith to be buried to-morrow at Finchley, and he is registered all right. A person comes to me at 11 o'clock at night and says, "I have got a body to get rid of, and I will give you £500 to do it." The

undertaker takes the body he has got to get rid of to Finchley, and buries it as William Smith without a certificate; we send that notice to the registrar, who refers to his book, and finds that it is quite right. Then the undertaker will take the real William Smith to Ilford Cemetery, say, and take the body up there with a certificate, which saves any inquiry being made.

What does he do with the other body?—He has already taken that up without a certificate to Finchley Cemetery; he buries the body he has got to get rid of at Finchley, and withholds the certificate of William Smith; the authorities then give notice to the registrar that William Smith was buried there, and the certificate was not delivered. The undertaker has that certificate in his possession then, and he can take the original William Smith up to another cemetery, and there they do not trouble, because they get a certificate delivered with the body.

In that way you think it is very easy to get rid of a body if anyone desires to do so?—Yes, unless there was a law passed that no body should be interred without a burial certificate being delivered at the time.

It is obvious that during an epidemic the public health might be endangered by delaying interment until the regulations as to registration had been complied with. Your Committee are therefore of opinion that in such circumstances the Government should be empowered to suspend the regulations, and to make such temporary arrangements as the necessities of the case may seem to require.

BURIAL.

It would appear that there is no legal obligation to bury dead bodies in a public burial ground or cemetery, or in land set apart for the purpose. The representatives of the deceased may, if they think proper to do so, cause the body to be interred in a garden or other private grounds.

Your Committee are of opinion that, in the interest of the community, burials in places other than those set apart for public interment should be subject to some regulation. They consider that no body should be interred in a private burial ground without notice having been given to the local Sanitary Authority 48 hours prior to the proposed interment.

As to the manner of burial of the dead, the terms of reference to your Committee do not admit of their dealing generally with the law on the subject, but only with such points in burial procedure as may operate as obstacles to the detection of crime in cases where exhumation is required.

In connection with this subject, your Committee have taken some evidence in reference to the practice of pit burial, or interment in common graves. This method of burial was explained to your Committee by Dr. Russell and Dr. Glaister, and the description given by the latter may be quoted. He says :—

Last week I went and refreshed my memory as to these pit burials, and what I saw was this : a long pit about 30 feet long, divided into partitions, and some of those partitions had been filled up. They had their occupants ; there were planks over the top, the

soil not covered in ; and the last division of the pit was still open, and the deposit of coffins was going on while I was still there.

Was that in a churchyard or in a cemetery?—In a cemetery.

There were only five small coffins in this pit when I examined it. I met the superintendent of the graveyard, and I got a few facts from him, to see if they corroborated my own observations on former occasions, and what he told me was that the coffins were just simply packed in as they could pack layer upon layer, with a few inches of earth upon each layer, until the top layer of coffins reached within three feet of the surface, when the soil was shovelled over them, and there was an end of it.

That the system is exceedingly unsatisfactory, is it not, for the purpose of identification of any body?—It is deplorable. It is simply impossible to identify a body after a certain time has elapsed in such a case as that.

And I suppose there are 50 or 60 bodies in a single pit?—It is difficult to give the right number, but I should think that is about it.

You also think that a bad method of burial as regards public health?—Certainly. It does not affect public health so much in a rural neighbourhood, though it may affect the health of people attending burials ; it is most disgusting in summer, as I have experienced it.

Have you any reason to think that this somewhat barbarous manner of disposing of

the bodies of the dead is common in Scotland?—It is common round the large cities, not round the country.

CREMATION.

Your Committee are of opinion that there is only one question in connection with this method of disposing of a dead body to which it is necessary for them to refer. That question is the supposed danger to the community arising from the fact that with the destruction of the body the possibility of obtaining evidence of the cause of death by post-mortem examination also disappears.

When suspicions of foul play have arisen in reference to a body that has been disposed of by burial, an exhumation and post-mortem examination of such body has often furnished conclusive evidence of the cause of death. It is evident that with the burning of the body the possibility of making such an examination disappears. Unless, therefore, special precautions be taken previous to cremation to obtain satisfactory evidence of the cause of death, this method of disposal of bodies would serve to lessen the risks of detection incurred by those who have brought about the death of any person by foul play.

The precautions taken by the Cremation Society before a body is cremated by them were explained to your Committee. It appears that two special certificates of the cause of death from medical men are obtained in such cases, and one of these certificates sets forth that in the opinion of the person certifying "there are no circumstances connected with the death which could make exhumation of the

body hereafter necessary." If these certificates are inconclusive a post-mortem examination is ordered, and, in the event of the relatives objecting to such an examination, the Society refuses to cremate the body. If, however, in a doubtful case, the body is eventually cremated, portions of the liver, kidney, and stomach are retained and preserved in spirit for subsequent examination, if occasion should arise.

Your Committee are of opinion that with the precautions adopted in connection with cremation, as carried out by the Cremation Society, there is little probability that cases of crime would escape detection, but inasmuch as these precautions are purely voluntary, your Committee consider that in the interests of public safety such regulations should be enforced by law.

The following are the summary of the principal recommendation of the Select Committee :—

1. That in no case should a death be registered without production of a certificate of the cause of death signed by a registered medical practitioner, or by a coroner after inquest, or in Scotland by a procurator fiscal.

2. That in each sanitary district a registered medical practitioner should be appointed as public medical certifier of the cause of death in cases in which a certificate from a medical practitioner in attendance is not forthcoming.

3. That a medical practitioner in attendance should be required, before giving a certificate of death, to personally inspect the body, but if, on the ground of distance or for other sufficient reason, he is unable to make this inspection

himself, he should obtain and attach to the certificate of the cause of death a certificate signed by two persons, neighbours of the deceased, verifying the fact of death.

4. That medical practitioners should be required to send certificates of death directly to the registrar, instead of handing them to the representatives of the deceased.

5. That a form of certificate of death should be prescribed, and that in giving a certificate medical practitioners should be required to use such form.

6. That it should be made a penal offence to bury or otherwise dispose of a body, except in time of epidemic, without an order from the registrar stating the place and mode of disposal, which order, after it has been acted upon, should be returned to the registrar who issued it.

7. That it should be made an offence to retain a dead body unburied or otherwise legally disposed of beyond a period not exceeding eight days, except by permission of a magistrate.

8. That the practice of burial in pits or common graves should be discontinued.

9. That still-births which have reached the stage of development of seven months should be registered upon the certificate of a registered medical practitioner, and that it should not be permitted to bury or otherwise dispose of the still-birth until an order for burial has been issued by the registrar.

10. That, subject always to the discretion of the Crown Office, the result of precognitions

taken by the procurators fiscal in Scotland, or the precognitions themselves, should be communicated to the representatives of the deceased when application is made for the same.

In 1891 there were registered 587,925 deaths in England and Wales. And of these were buried without any certificate, 16,152. And with a certificate ill-defined and unspecified, 26,140. And on coroner's certificate, 32,432.

Prevention is better than cure, and all necessary precautions should be taken *before* the burial and not be needed afterwards. The argument against cremation is that by cremation *the power of exhumation* is gone. But what is this power, and how has it been exercised?

For the last 20 years the yearly average has been five bodies exhumed, and of these the proportion is less than one annually of those who have met their death criminally. And the facts about poison are:—

That only the metallic and mineral poisons are capable of detection for any length of time in the human body after burial. Vegetable poisons are rapidly decomposed after death.

Having proved, therefore, the medico-legal dangers arising from ordinary interment, the question at once arises whether by cremation these dangers are in any way got over.

The obvious reply is that the medico-legal difficulty ought to have disappeared, both in regard to interment and cremation alike, by legislation upon the ground suggested by the Select Committee. Sir Henry Thompson has many times interviewed the Home Secretary, urging legislation upon those lines, but so far nothing has been done.

The various English crematoria have therefore to deal with the matter as it stands, and under the guidance of Sir Henry Thompson the following requirements are necessary before cremation can be resorted to:—

1. Application for cremation to be signed by the representative of the deceased.
2. Two exhaustive medical certificates beyond the ordinary registrar's order for burial.

On the following pages are copies of the forms issued by the Manchester Crematorium.



APPLICATION FOR CREMATION TO BE SIGNED
BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE DECEASED.

I,
of
in the County of
(occupation) , hereby request
the Directors of the Manchester Crematorium
Limited to undertake the cremation of the body
of my *
(name)
of in the
County of (occupation),
and I certify that the deceased expressed to me no
objection (orally or in writing) to be cremated after
death.

I hereby undertake to abide and be bound by the
General Instructions and Rules of the Company,
and I absolve the Company from any legal or other
responsibility through any accident arising to any
urn, niche, tablet, or monument of the deceased, or
through the destruction of the Crematorium by fire,
civil tumult, the act of God, or through any other
cause whatever, and also for any delay or incon-
venience in the arrangements for cremation.

Dated the day of 190

(Signature)

* State relationship to deceased.

FIRST MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF THE
CAUSE OF DEATH
AND CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED THEREWITH.

Name of the deceased in full

Place of Residence

Occupation Age Date of death

Married or Single Did die at
own residence ?

If not, at a friend's house, lodging-house, }
hotel, nursing-house, or other place, }
to be named

The following to be answered by the Medical Man who
personally attended the deceased:—

1. How long have you professionally }
known and attended the deceased ? }
2. Did you attend h in h last illness, }
and on what date did you see h }
last ? }
3. Did you personally ascertain that death }
had taken place, and that the body }
was that of the above-named ? }
- 4.* What was the nature of the disease }
or injury—privation or neglect, if }
any—causing death [mentioning its }
duration in years, months, or less] ? }

FIRST MEDICAL CERTIFICATE—*Continued.*

5. * What was the immediate or proximate cause of death [mentioning the duration of the final stage or attack in days, hours, or less] ?
- 6 Had any surgical operations been performed during the last few months, and, if so, of what nature ?
7. Is the above report, regarding the questions marked *, based on a necropsy, or on your personal knowledge of the course of the disease during his last illness ?
8. With your knowledge of his age, constitution, and habits, does the character of the fatal attack suggest any doubt as to its cause, or is there any circumstance leading you to believe that a further examination of the body is desirable ?
9. Does there exist, to the best of your knowledge and belief, any reason why the body should not be cremated ?

Signed

Date

Address

Qualification

[The Medical Attendant will sign here.]

in the County of _____ of _____

Dated the day of 190

Professional title

(This certificate must be signed by a registered medical practitioner, who must not be related to the deceased, and not by the same medical practitioner who has signed the first medical certificate.)

Can it be denied that the medico-legal difficulty has practically disappeared where cremation is resorted to, but that until the legislature steps in with an efficient Act of Parliament it is ever present with ordinary interment?

CHAPTER VI.

Cremation and Sanitation.

Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
 A few feet of earth when life is done,
 A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
 A rich juicy meal for the worms to eat,
 Rank grass overhead, and damp clay around,
 Brave lodgings for one, these in holy ground.

Charles Dickens.

AND now for a consideration of the arguments specially in favour of cremation, of which we may first consider the sanitary aspect.

In regard to a dead body we have a duty to perform—

1. To the deceased.
2. To ourselves and our descendants.

In relation to the deceased we must see that his dead body is dealt with kindly, decently, and in a spirit of reverence to his memory. In relation to ourselves and our descendants, we must see that in our manner of dealing with the dead body we leave no legacy of disease and pestilence from which we and our descendants may suffer from our disregard of proper sanitary precautions.

We must remember that there has to be dealt with something belonging to nature, and not something above and beyond our material world.

The individuality of man is independent of his material atoms.

It is perhaps forgetfulness of this truth which gives rise to the existing prejudice against dealing with the body by cremation.

Before death—

There is the personality.

The being whom we love and revere.

The ego.

The individuality.

The soul.

After death—

The personality. The individuality is gone.

However much we may call upon that body to answer, there is no reply, no responsive touch, no look, no word.

What is left

Is merely the shell.

The empty chamber of the living soul.

What was once so beautiful and beloved is now quickly changing into a putrefying mass of corruption.

The human body is composed principally of just one dozen of the so-called elements, viz. :—

Carbon,	Chlorine,
Hydrogen,	Potash,
Oxygen,	Calcium,
Nitrogen	Soda,
Sulphur,	Iron,
Phosphorus,	Magnesium.

There are besides minute quantities of other elements, which we can here neglect.

These elements form in the human body about 97 or 98 parts of water and organic combinations resolvable into gases, and only about 2 or 3 parts of permanent ashes ; that is to say, the body of a man weighing say 180 lbs. would, during cremation, give off 175 lbs. of gases, and leave about 5 lbs. of ashes only. These calculations are only approximate, as few reliable data have so far been collected.

Immediately after death decomposition sets in :—

The resolution of the body from its complex chemical compounds into simpler and more elementary substances.

And this important fact must be borne in mind, viz. :—

That whether you inter the body or whether you cremate it, the result in the end is exactly the same.

In the former case by—

Slow decomposition.

Slow putrefaction.

What is called the *natural* process.

And in the latter case—

Quickly.

Surely.

Without danger to anyone.

But by the aid of man. And are we forbidden to render such aid ?

There is a well-known saying, "God helps those who help themselves," and surely in this matter it is most applicable.

In ordinary interment we use the following methods :—

1. Brick graves, with flags between each layer of coffins.
2. Hermetically sealed leaden linings to coffins.
3. Graves, 10 feet deep, containing five or six bodies one above the other, with scarce sufficient earth intervening to cover the previous interment.
4. Trenches containing 14 to 18 bodies, with a sprinkling of earth.
5. Catacombs.
6. Vaults under floors of churches.
7. Overcrowded churchyards.
8. Acres of cemeteries.
9. Pit burials.
10. Common graves.

And what is the evidence in connection therewith?

The Local Government Board, in a Memorandum on the Sanitary Requirements of Cemeteries, says:—

The dangers to the public health to which places of burial may give rise are of two kinds, viz., *the contamination* (1st) *of air* by the gaseous and volatile, and (2nd) *of drinking water* by the liquid and soluble products of decomposition.

1. *Contamination of Air*.—This may take place in several modes. The gases evolved from putrefying bodies may make their way to the surface through pores or fissures in the ground, or may pass into open graves dug in their neighbourhood, or they may diffuse themselves laterally through the ground air and be drawn up into the interior of houses. Or noxious emanations may be given off from putrid

drainage water, whether baled out of graves and thrown upon the surface, or draining into open channels or watercourses. Thus nuisance and danger to health may be occasioned, not only to gravediggers and persons attending funerals, but also to the inhabitants of houses in the neighbourhood of the burial-ground.

2. *Pollution of Water.*—Foul liquids from graves may enter and pollute a stream, or wells in the vicinity of a graveyard may be injured by percolation from it, and in either case, if the water be used for drinking, injury to health may be occasioned. The liability of wells to pollution obviously depends partly upon their proximity to it, and partly upon the configuration and geological structure of the ground.

3. *Relations of Cemetery to Sources of Water Supply.*—It is evident that the drainage of a cemetery should not be allowed to enter a stream from which water is drawn for domestic purposes.

A Committee of Physicians appointed by the American Medical Association report on May 6th, 1886 :—

We believe the *horrid practice of earth burial* does more to propagate the germs of disease and death, and to spread desolation and pestilence over the human race, than do all man's ingenuity and ignorance in every other custom of habit. . . .
The fatal illusion that the earth renders harmless and innocuous the corpse must be dispelled. . . .
 Incontrovertible proof of the fact that the vicinity of graveyards is unhealthy is superabundant. . . .
 Point to a city, if you can, whose growth has not demanded the closing of its ultramural burial-places.

Their danger is therefore absolutely proved and conceded *by practice*, and not even the most *confirmed inhumationist* can deny it.

Dr. Cameron says :—

I might multiply examples *ad nauseam* to prove the danger of contamination to our water supply which many of our burial-grounds present.

It is sufficiently evident, however, that as every burial-ground must be drained, and that the drainage must ultimately find its way into our rivers, a considerable portion of that drainage must find its way into rivers and watercourses from which water is taken for domestic purposes, thus affording an obvious channel for the propagation of the infection.

The late Prof. Samuel D. Gross, M.D., one of the greatest surgeons the world ever possessed, called burial a horrible practice, and maintained that :—

“If people could see the human body after the process of decomposition sets in, which is as soon as the vital spark ceases to exist, they would not want to be buried ; they would be in favour of cremation. If they could go into a dissecting-room, and see the horrid sights of the dissecting-table, they would not wish to be buried. Burying the human body, I think, is a horrible thing. If more was known about the human frame while undergoing decomposition, people would turn with horror from the custom of burying their dead. It takes a human body 50, 60, 80 years—yes, longer than that—to decay. Think of it ! The remains of a friend lying under six feet of ground, or less, for that length of time, going through the slow stages of decay, and other bodies all this time being buried around these remains. Infants grow up, and pass

into manhood or womanhood ; grow old, and get near the door of death ; and during all that time the body which was buried in their infancy lies a few feet under ground in this sickening state, undergoing the slow process of decay. Think of thousands of such bodies crowded into a few acres of ground, and then reflect that these graves, or many of them, in time fill with water, and that water percolates through the ground and mixes with the springs and rivers from which we drink.

“People turn with dread from the subject of cremation. Why, if they knew what physicians know—what they have learned in the dissecting-room—they would look upon burning the human body as a beautiful art in comparison with burying it. There is something eminently repulsive to me about the idea of lying a few feet under ground for a century, or perhaps two centuries, going through the process of decomposition. When I die, I want my body to be burned.”

The Italian physician, Felix Dell’Acqua, gives it as his opinion (in his study on cremation) that graveyards infect the earth, the air, and the water, and constantly endanger public health during an epidemic.

Dr. Polli proved that graves deteriorate the air we breathe, and contaminate the water we drink, by loading them with organic matter.

Prof. Antonio Selmi, of Mantua, claims to have discovered organic germs in the air above graves, which he called septopneuma, and which, when injected under the skin of a pigeon, caused a typhus-like disease that ended in death within three days.

Specific germs may enter the atmosphere from the graves, which convey the deadliest of maladies

being carried very far by the wind. But the agent that makes cemetery gases so dangerous is carbonic acid.

Dr. Parkes (*Practical Hygiene*), the eminent English scientist, says:—

“The decomposition of bodies gives rise to a very large amount of carbonic acid. Ammonia and an offensive putrid vapour are also given off. The air of most cemeteries is richer in carbonic acid, and the organic matter is perceptibly large, when tested by potassium permanganate.

“It is a well-known fact that carbonic acid, when inhaled in an undiluted state, causes death ; it is fatal to all forms of life. When inhaled diluted with air it interferes with the introduction of oxygen into the body, and causes the carbonic acid, which should be eliminated, to be retained. This, no doubt, prevents the proper tissue changes, and must in time undermine the healthiest body by seriously affecting its nutrition.”

Prof. Dr. E. Reichardt, of Jena, published a large number of cases in which drinking-water was polluted by cemetery emanations.

Many cases are on record where water contaminated by graveyard emanations, by poisonous fluids oozing through the soil, has proven harmful to health. Numerous cases of typhoid fever sprung from this source. Contagious diseases can also be communicated in this way. Riecke and Galtie have compiled statistics of cases of typhoid fever and other contagious maladies due to this cause that withstand the severest criticism.

The rivers die into offensive pools
And, charged with putrefaction, breathe a gross
And mortal nuisance into all the air.

Not a few analyses of water tainted by graveyard emanations testify to the fact that it is harmful—nay that it is extremely dangerous to those who consume it. Nor is the danger always apparent. In 1874 the Broad Street pump at London, England, carried cholera to those who drank its water ; yet the latter looked clean, had no perceptible taste, and was odourless.

The very witching time of night
When graveyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion on this world.

Shakespeare.

To the question, "Can an epidemic of any kind be caused by graveyard emanations?" there is but one reply ; the facts on record compel us to answer in the affirmative.

Dr. Buck, in his excellent work on Hygiene, writes : "It is impossible for any one to say how long the *materies morbi* may continue to live underground. If organic matter can be boiled and frozen without losing its vitality, and seeds 3000 years old will sprout when planted, it would be hardihood to assert that the poison of cholera, or small-pox, or typhus may not for years lie dormant, but not dead, in the moist temperature of the grave."

The Right Hon. Sir Lyon Playfair says in relation to this subject in 1885 :—

"In most of our churchyards the dead are harming the living by destroying the soil, fouling the air, contaminating water-springs, and spreading the seeds of disease.

"I have officially inspected many churchyards and made reports on their state, which even to read make me shudder

“By the act of ordinary interment we literally sow broadcast through the land innumerable seeds of pestilence—germs which long retain their vitality—many destined at some future time to fructify in premature death or ruined health for thousands.

“But it may be said all this is changed now—intermural interments no longer exist. Why produce this shocking testimony of the past?”

Sir Henry Thompson replies :—

“Because it enables us to know what we banish from the centre of our towns to suburban cemeteries. These latter rapidly become urban, and will one day be found in dangerous vicinity to our homes.”

We might multiply these examples *ad nauseam*, but refrain from so doing, knowing that many persons could mention similar facts which have come under their own notice.

And when we think, is it not peculiar that our sanitary authorities, in cases of infectious diseases, visit our houses and compel the disinfection of the bedclothes, etc., but allow the far more infected body to be interred in the usual way.

It should be remembered that in zymotic diseases generally—

None are natural ;

None are unavoidable.

They are a proof of—

Our ignorance, or

Our negligence ;

and with proper sanitary precautions they might ultimately be exterminated.

By cremation there is—

Rapid decomposition ;

Rapid putrefaction.

By the action of fire, the grand purifier—

Clean.

Pure.

Innocuous.



CHAPTER VII.

Cremation and the Desecration of
the Body.

PEOPLE assert that by ordinary interment there has been no desecration of the body, and that it has secured a permanent resting-place.

The following extract in reference to a London church reads thus:—

“The vaults of a church in the city were in a most revolting and dangerous condition, and had, for some years previously, occasioned considerable uneasiness to many of the parishioners; and in the more immediate vicinity of the church the inhabitants complained of the nuisance. One of the churchwardens, thinking the cause of complaint might arise from external agencies vitiating the atmosphere, ordered the windows, the roof, and every part of the building to be examined and made secure, and double doors to be made at the entrance of the church; notwithstanding these directions were obeyed, the stench became insupportable; many of the congregation were, at various times, compelled

to leave the church, and some were seized with illness during service and conveyed home. The churchwarden above alluded to, anticipating the source of the mischief, caused the vaults to be examined, when upwards of one hundred bodies were found in an active state of putrefaction. The workmen employed on this occasion, upon first entering the vault, were almost instantly prostrated upon the floor ; one poor fellow who had advanced further than the rest was with difficulty saved ; he was dragged out by his companions, almost lifeless. The vault was ultimately cleared, and all the putrescent bodies were buried in a common pit, dug in the churchyard."

And further—a letter to the *Times* dated 25th June 1839:—

Sir,—Passing along Portugal Street on Saturday evening, about ten minutes before seven, I was much shocked at seeing two men employed in carrying baskets of human bones from the corner of the ground next the old watch-house (where there was a tarpaulin hung over the rails to prevent their being seen, and where they appeared to be heaped up in a mound) to the back of the ground through a small gate.

Where this leads to I do not know ; but I should be glad, through the medium of your invaluable journal, to ask, why is this desecration ?

Sir, I feel more particularly than you might do, as I have seen twelve of my nearest and dearest relatives consigned to the grave in that ground ; and I felt that, perhaps, I might at

the moment he viewing, in the basket of skulls which passed before me, those of my own family thus brutally exhumed.

At all events, for the sake of the community at large, it should be inquired into.

J. M.

Let us continue with a note on London graveyards from the *Daily News*, a note well representing the "respect for the dead" shown by our age:—

"Accustomed as we are to the great cemeteries in the far suburbs of the metropolis, we are apt to forget the older and smaller burial-grounds much nearer town. Mrs. Basil Holmes, in her capacity of honorary secretary to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, has compiled a list of the past and present graveyards of the whole metropolitan area. Time after time, as the great city grew, have new burial-grounds been formed upon its outskirts, so that the older portions of London are dotted with the resting-places of its dead. Mrs. Holmes has collected records of *no fewer than four hundred and forty-four such plots of ground, not including the hundreds of churches and chapels within whose walls interments have taken place.* The number seems large, but is probably very far below the truth, many having been built over or destroyed to make room for the ever-growing crowd. *One hundred and sixteen of the grounds* included in the above list are *known to have entirely disappeared*, some having been utilised for the construction of new streets or for the widening of narrow ones; some for the making of railway lines or stations; and others for the erection of public or private buildings. Thus Queen Victoria Street absorbed three graveyards,

the Metropolitan Railway four, while Smithfield, Mercer's Hall, the Mansion House, the Marylebone Court House, the New Law Courts, King's College Hospital, and the National Gallery all stand on the sites of ancient cemeteries. *It is, however, strange to be told that one old burial-ground is covered by a brewery, another by a chocolate warehouse, two by artisans' dwellings, one by a workhouse, and another by a school.* The old execution ground at Tyburn forms the corner of Upper Bryanson Street; Old Street Pest Field is occupied by Bath Street, E.C.; and many acres to the north, and the original burial-ground for Jews forms the site of Jewin Street and neighbourhood. *Besides these, there are some thirty-eight similar plots which have either been taken for private gardens, like the gardens of the Bank of England, for playgrounds for the Board or other schools, for storeyards, and so forth, or are now to let as building sites. Sixty-nine old burial-grounds have been laid out as gardens and thrown open to the public; six more will probably follow suit; and no fewer than one hundred and ninety-one remain closed, but not yet appropriated to baser use."*

It is needless, however, to go back to 1839. At the present day the same disgraceful scenes occur. In November 1901 certain persons were convicted at the Liverpool Assizes of disturbing an old graveyard at Ashton-under-Lyne, and throwing the coffins and remains of human bodies into a pit in excavating for building purposes. Whilst on the subject of desecration by cremation, one might refer to a pamphlet published by Dr. Seymour Haden, an opponent of cremation, who makes use of the following extraordinary statements :—

1. That the English press has so far identified itself with cremation as to publish unwillingly, and frequently to suppress altogether anything which tells seriously against it.

2. That while burial is a complete process, leaving no *residuum* behind it, cremation is an incomplete process, leaving a very positive *residuum* behind it, not to say a very embarrassing *residuum*. That while one, therefore, is an efficient and perfect process, the other is an inefficient and imperfect one, and, therefore, as my distinguished friend says truly, but not I think quite intentionally, it ought to be "made an offence." That while by burial the body remains at rest till such time as its perishable parts re-enter the air, and its imperishable parts remain to form (as nature intended) an integrate part of the earth's substance—by cremation it is thrust into a furnace and, by the aid of one of those tall chimneys which we have been so long trying to get rid of, its combustible parts are poured—and that for two or three hours—into the pure air around, and its incombustible part (weighing from five to seven pounds, more or less) is returned to the mourners to take away with them! What the effect on the surrounding air would be if a dozen or twenty of such vomitoria were all at work at the same time I leave it to those whose fate it might be to live within half a dozen miles of them to imagine!

It is a pleasure to know that the English press has identified itself with cremation, but we are not aware that they have refused to publish anything which tells against it.

It is somewhat amusing to hear that interment is a complete process, leaving no residuum behind it. Our opinion was somewhat otherwise.

It might here be mentioned that the word "burial" can be used alike for interment and cremation. It is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "concealment." Cremation very effectively conceals the body.

The idea of the pollution of the air for half a dozen miles is simply delicious. Dr. Seymour Haden is evidently entirely ignorant of the effects of a properly constructed furnace.



CHAPTER VIII.

The Cost of Cremation.

AN idea is prevalent that cremation is much more expensive than earth burial. It is admitted that with the very poor, until cremation becomes a municipal matter, it is more expensive, but to middle-class persons cremation is cheaper.

Instead of an expensive coffin, with ornaments and an inner shell, the following instructions should be observed :—

1. Coffins for cremation are best made of dry oak boards, not more than half an inch thick, but poplar or pine wood may also be used, with as few nails as possible, wooden pegs being sufficient and preferable. Coffins must not have cross pieces under the sole or on the bottom, as these have to be removed before the coffin can enter the Crematorium; no objection will be taken to strips being placed lengthwise to strengthen the bottom of the coffin.

2. Coffins must not be painted or varnished, but may be covered with a thin woollen material of white, black, or purple cloth.

3. No brass or metal handles or ornaments of any kind are allowed on the coffin.

4. No sawdust must on any account be put in the coffin, and no pitch must be used for coating the inside.

5. If the state of the body, or the illness from which the deceased died, make it desirable, a thin zinc lining should be inserted in the coffin; no other metal, however, but zinc can under any circumstances be allowed for the purpose, and undertakers will be held responsible for not complying with this condition.

6. The extreme outside dimensions allowed for the coffin are as follows :—

Length	-	7 feet.
Width	-	2 feet 3 inches.
Depth	-	1 foot 10 inches.

The following are the charges made by the Manchester Crematorium, but these, of course, are subject to great reduction upon the number of cremations becoming more frequent :—

SCALE OF CHARGES.

CREMATION FEE £5 5 0

For the Working Classes and
those of Limited Means a Reduced
Charge is made from £2 2 0

This sum includes the cost of the incineration the use of the Chapel and the Organ, the Decoration of the Hall with Plants, and the cost of an Urn for the reception of the ashes.

DISPOSAL OF REMAINS.

Deposit in niche in inside wall of the Crematorium from	£5	5	0
Deposit in niche in outside wall of the Crematorium	3	3	0
The like for the Working Classes and those of Limited Means from	2	0	0
Lettering on Marble Slab covering niche from	1	1	0
Deposit in the public vault from	0	10	6

The grounds of the Crematorium have been divided into 659 grave spaces, each measuring one square yard. These may be purchased for burial of the ashes, for use as family vaults, or for the erection of monuments to contain the ashes.

Similar scales of charges prevail at the other English crematoria.

The following may be considered a fair charge for a cremation funeral for persons of the middle classes:—

Coffin	£3	10	0
Hearse... ..	1	1	0
Carriages (each)	1	1	0
Four Bearers	1	0	0
Coach for Bearers	0	12	0
Use of Pall	0	7	6
Shroud... ..	0	7	6
Undertaker's Fee	2	2	0
Cremation and Urn	5	5	0
	£15	6	0

To which may be added—

Niche and Inscription for recep- tion of Urn	£4	4	0
	£19	10	0

CHAPTER IX.

Cremation and the Land Question.

THERE is one argument in favour of cremation which is becoming *more and more important every day*. That is the economic argument.

Dr. William Holder, of Hull, in a very striking lecture on "Cremation *versus* Burial," says:—

"I have told you that in England and Wales we bury over half a million bodies each year. If each body weighs an average of eight stone, that means we place four million stones of putrefying flesh and bone into our land yearly."

Let us with regard to this here quote a few words by the late Bishop Fraser:—

"Here is another hundred acres of land withdrawn from the food-producing area of the country for ever I feel convinced that before long we shall have to face this problem, how to bury our dead out of our sight more practically and more seriously than we have hitherto done. In the same sense in which the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, I hold that the earth was made not for the dead but for the living. No intelligent faith can suppose that any Christian doctrine is affected by the manner in which or the time in which this mortal body of ours crumbles into dust and sees corruption. . . . This is a subject that will have to be considered before long. Cemeteries

are becoming not only a difficulty, an expense, and an inconvenience, but an actual danger."

Is it ever realised the acres and acres of valuable ground taken yearly for the making of cemeteries, and for which the ratepayers have to provide the funds?

Land not in out-of-the-way districts, but round and about our overcrowded towns.

This argument forms one of the paramount problems of the day, and waiting for an immediate and satisfactory solution—the only satisfactory solution being cremation.

And let us appeal for one moment to the clergy, the owners of vaults and graves, *and to those creatures of sentiment* who long to revere the memory of their departed ones in the quiet churchyard.

Are not the sanitary authorities fast closing the churchyards and driving everyone to the unlovely cemeteries?

Here is a happy solution:—

Under the Burials Act 1853 the right of interment in vaults situate within or under any church or chapel was prohibited, except under special license from the Home Secretary first had and obtained, it being shown to him that the exercise of such privilege would not be injurious to health. In view of the possible danger to the public health, the licenses so granted have been very few, the consequence being that owners of such vaults have been unable to exercise their rights of ownership. Cremation, however, has opened a way to the future exercise of such rights.

Recently application was made under the Act, by the Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium, to the Home Secretary for his consent to the interment

of the cremated remains of a gentleman in a vault situate inside a parish church.

The application was supported by the written consent of the vicar of the church within which the vault was situate, also by a certificate by Mr. Henry Simon, the Chairman of the Crematorium, "that the cremated remains consisted almost entirely of calcium phosphates and lime and mere faint traces of carbon, but absolutely no organic compounds, and were therefore absolutely innocuous, having been subjected to a temperature of 2000° F. (the melting point of silver), and that no danger to the health of any human being could therefore arise by the burial of the cremated remains in a vault situate within a church."

Upon the application being made, the Right Honourable Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bart., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Home Affairs, at once intimated that he had no objection to the deposit of the cremated remains in the family vault situate within the parish church named in the application.

There could first be the actual cremation, and afterwards the burial and religious service.

Vaults, graves, and closed churchyards could again be used, the space required for a cremated body being very small indeed.

The clergy are against cremation, because they say it lessens their hold on their flock, and tends to loosen the religious principles of their flock. This is the answer:—

Let us imagine dignified arcades built round our churchyards, with columbaria and niches for urns. These could be made very beautiful—a comfort to the friends of the deceased without danger to health to those surviving.

CHAPTER X.

Cremation and Premature Burial.

PRINTED forms, giving directions for future cremation, have been signed by persons whose great dread has been premature burial.

They know that by cremation there are :—

1. The two compulsory medical certificates ; and what is more important still—
2. The entry of the body into a temperature of 2000° Fahr., by which the action of the heart ceases at once.

Are our readers aware that many cases have happened wherein a person has been buried whilst alive ?

Think of the eternity of horror on the two or three minutes awakening, and the hopeless struggle to free oneself.

And it is so difficult at times to properly diagnose death.

Professor D. Ferrier, in an article on "Death," in *Quain's Dictionary of Medicine*, observes :—

"It is not always easy to determine when the spark of life has become finally extinguished. From fear of being buried alive, which prevails

more abroad than in this country, some infallible criterion of death, capable of being applied by unskilled persons, has been considered a desideratum, and valuable prizes have been offered for such a discovery. The conditions most resembling death are syncope, asphyxia, and trance, particularly the last. We cannot, however, say that any infallible criterion applicable by the vulgar has been discovered."

The *British Medical Journal* is constrained to admit that there have been cases where the most important of these tests are unavailing, and instances the very exceptional case of Colonel Townshend, who apparently possessed the extremely rare power of partially suspending, by an act of volition, the action of the heart. It appears that Colonel Townshend possessed the power, by a mere effort of will, of so suspending the action of the heart that he was able to pass into a profound sleep, or condition of stupor, in which no radial pulse could be felt, no beating of the heart was perceptible by palpitation, and no moisture condensed on a bright mirror held to his mouth. This, it is stated, was before the invention of the stethoscope, but from extended inquiries it is found that this instrument is very rarely used, a single inspection of the face of "the corpse" and a few words of condolence to the relatives being the ordinary medical routine in practice in this country, but in the majority of cases there is no medical inspection at all.



CHAPTER XI.

Cremation from a Sentimental Point
of View.

It has been shown you that there is no reasonable religious objection to cremation.

That the medico-legal difficulty is under the present state of the law wholly on the side of cremation.

That there is much to be said for cremation from a sanitary point of view.

That on the score of economy, both in land and on our own purse, cremation should be favoured.

That it obliterates any fear of premature burial.

That the process of cremation is not that objectionable thing once thought of.

But has there been removed that prejudice which people call sentiment? All other barriers being removed, this one is the last to surrender. Familiarity with the subject is the great thing needed.

Is it not that true sentiment is outraged when an attempt is made to realise the horrible nature of putrefaction, and shrinks back with inexpressible

repugnance from any vision, however transient, of the prolonged and revolting phases of decay?

On the one side—

The corruption of the grave.

On the other—

The purifying influence of fire.

At present, the sentiments which we cherish at the most pathetic moments of our lives, when we have to part for ever on earth from those we have loved, associate themselves with the quiet grave in the churchyard. Cannot sentiments equally tender and reverential gather about the body after cremation, and give to it at last the mystic sanction of the heart.

We have read of the revolting details to which the present sentiment clings. What we see is the fair outside—the quiet grave, the green turf, the surrounding shrubs and flowers. But if the grave were opened, and the operations which ruthless nature is carrying on a few feet below the surface were revealed to view, we should shrink back in horror from the sight, and think how cruel it was that we should have been compelled to consign the remains of those we loved to such a doom.

Strip off six feet of earth from any cemetery and the spectacle would be unendurable. The very thought of it fills us with loathing and disgust.

We are forced to think of our dead in dreams. The actual facts we dare not face. Cremation entails no such loathsome certainties. We see and know the last. There are no posthumous horrors to affright the imagination.

It is even tranquilising to reflect, nay more, it is comforting to remember that the remains of those

who were dear to us, instead of being for years the prey of worms, have ascended up to heaven in flames. They have mixed again with the elements from which they and all things terrestrial sprang. The neighbourhood of the crematorium itself becomes consecrated in a special manner with the memory of the departed one. The atmosphere itself also, but in a pure, holy, and precious manner.

Even where sentiment has veered round in our minds in favour of cremation, we sometimes fear to exercise our wishes or the wishes of the deceased.

It is a new departure. What will our neighbours say? Oh, that bogey, Mrs. Grundy! When will she be exterminated?

To those who favour cremation we say, Don't delay giving the necessary directions.

Sign a request for cremation. Let your request be properly known, and ask that it be carried out.

Be manly, be honest, be consistent, and don't be persuaded to follow the old way when the actual moment arrives, specially remembering that all arrangements should be made before death, so as to make the duties of the survivors the more easy.

Persons desirous of having their bodies cremated are recommended to record in precise terms their wishes and directions in regard thereto.

These directions should either be recorded in the person's will, or (which is preferable) in a form signed, dated, and witnessed in duplicate. One copy should be deposited with the signer's executor or next of kin, and the other sent to the Secretary of the Crematorium, by whom the document will be preserved and regarded as confidential.

FORM OF REQUEST FOR THOSE DESIROUS
OF BEING CREMATED AFTER DEATH.

BELIEVING that the duty of the individual to his kind includes providing for such final disposal of his body as shall be least detrimental to those who survive him ;

AND BELIEVING that the modern process of incineration provides the quickest and safest mode of such disposal ;

I HEREBY SOLEMNLY EXPRESS to my survivors my earnest desire and request that on my decease my body may be cremated at the Manchester Crematorium, or at such other convenient place as shall furnish the proper facilities.

Dated the day of 190

Signed

Address

Witness

CHAPTER XII.

The Law with respect to Burials.

THE executor must bury the deceased in a manner suitable to the estate he leaves behind him. These are the remarks of Mr. Justice Blackstone in his commentaries.

Prima facie the executors are entitled to the possession of and are responsible for the burial of a dead body.

There is no property in a dead body, but after the death of a person his executors may have such a right of possession that they may obtain a peremptory mandamus against any person in possession of such body.

A man cannot by will dispose of his dead body, there being no property in a dead body; and any directions in a will for cremation could not be enforced and are void as against the wishes of the executor.

Therefore, when cremation is desired, the person desiring cremation should make a will appointing executors favourable to cremation, and giving an express direction to them for cremation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Description of the Manchester
Crematorium.

THE Manchester Crematorium consists of a hall or chapel, and a separate contiguous chamber containing the furnace. Columbaria for the reception of the urns and memorial tablets are provided in arched recesses on the inside and outside of the principal walls of the building.

The hall is about fifty feet long by twenty-five feet wide, and of proportionate height. In the centre of the wall opposite to the principal entrance is placed the aperture leading to the furnace, which in the separate space occupies basement and ground floor. A vestry or record room, and a retiring room, lavatories, etc., are situated at the back of the hall.

The hall is flanked on either side by open arched colonnades raised above the level of the ground, protecting the columbaria in the outside wall.

Dignity is given to the main entrance of the hall by means of a lofty arched porch, from which steps connect on either side to the outer colonnades and columbaria.

The style chosen for the building is Romanesque, similar to some of the churches in Lombardy and Venice, and the material used is terra-cotta.

For a cremation service the body is borne by the bearers along the centre of the hall and placed upon the catafalque, where it remains during the religious service until the words of committal.

In the hall there is a pulpit, and also an organ, so that, if desired, a choral service may be held, and all this is performed *inside* the building, instead of partly in church and partly at the grave-side, thus avoiding the mourners being exposed with bare heads to the possibly inclement weather, a fruitful source, by the way, of future illnesses and in some cases actual death.

The decoration of the hall adds greatly to the beauty of the service.

At the words of committal an electric button is pressed, a curtain drawn, and a door opened, whereupon the coffin glides noiselessly, by the aid of an invisible chain, into the chamber beyond, where it remains until the conclusion of the service, the door again being closed and the curtains unfolded.

The process of cremation does not commence until the religious service is concluded, and the mourners have left the building.

Many persons have been somewhat in favour of the principle of cremation, but decidedly adverse to its practice; their opinions have, however, at once veered round enthusiastically in favour of the practice of cremation after attending a cremation service.

DESCRIPTION OF FURNACE.

The furnace mainly consists of the gas generator and the cremating chamber, which are both built together in one block, and connected by gas and air conduits. The gas generator is a V-shaped furnace of the vertical type, built of fire-bricks, and fitted with suitable fire grating. The fuel for charging the generator is fed through two cast-iron hoppers arranged with slides on the top of furnace.

The cremating chamber is entirely built of the best fire clay material, and constructed in the shape of a horizontal retort, with an arched top and a perforated or grid-like bottom; both ends are provided with vertical sliding doors. Underneath the cremating chamber there is a second chamber, in front of which is a funnel-shaped ash hopper and at the back a sliding door. This second chamber serves for finally burning any parts of the body which may fall during the process through the perforated bottom of the upper and principal chamber into which the body to be cremated has first been introduced.

We will now describe the process of heating the furnace and that of cremation. For this purpose the gas generator is charged with clean fuel, preferably pure coke, and for a few hours an ordinary fire maintained, gradually increasing in intensity. The hot gases thus created pass through conduits up to the cremating chamber, heating its walls increasingly. This method of firing, however, is only used in the beginning, as it would not be sufficient to produce the intense heat which we require in the cremating chamber, which should reach about 1800 to 2000° Fahr., something near the melting point of silver.

The fire, therefore, is, after a time, conducted in a different way, viz., instead of ordinary complete com-

bustion of the coke being allowed to take place, the supply of atmospheric air is reduced by closing the slides, and an imperfect combustion only allowed to take place. Instead of carbonic acid, which is the result of complete combustion, oxide of carbon only is thus engendered, which, at a point higher up in the furnace, and at the sides of the upper cremation chamber, is brought into contact with pure atmospheric air entering through separate channels. The combustion of the oxide of carbon by this means is taking place exactly at the point where the greatest heat is absolutely wanted, viz., around the body to be cremated.

The air thus is heated before coming into contact with the carbonic oxide, and produces in this way a much higher degree of heat than could be obtained by the admission of cold air.

The furnace is ready for cremation as soon as the cremating chambers glow with a bright orange colour.

The body to be cremated can then be introduced, and after about an hour the process is completed, and the remains are by means of an asbestos brush pushed into the hopper, falling hence, without being touched by human hands, into the urn which has previously been placed underneath.

The intense heat used in the furnace for the Manchester Crematorium is an absolute guarantee that no question can arise of even the possibility of any unpleasant odour or nuisance of any kind. In the base of the chimney, which occupies the centre of the tower attached to the Crematorium, and which has a height of 75 feet, there is, however, a second coke fire provided, through which the gases coming from the principal furnace can be passed. The

gases evolved in the process leave the cremating chamber at the top, and pass through the lateral down-take flues into the chimney.

The service over, and the cremation concluded, the question arises what to do with the remains.

There are several courses open :—

1. Insertion in inside niche.
2. Insertion in outside niche.
3. Burial in the grounds.
4. Vault in the grounds.
5. Burial in cemetery or churchyard.
6. Vault in cemetery or churchyard.
7. Placing of urn in niche inside a church.
8. Dispersal of the ashes, and brass or marble tablet in the church or crematorium commemorating the fact.
9. Medallion of deceased in the church or crematorium.



Remarriage Statistics.

1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	Totals
GREAT BRITAIN.											
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2
..	..	..	..	1	10	16	12	16	20	18	93
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17	17
..	..	..	..	..	2	10	27	23	40	40	142
104	101	125	150	137	173	173	240	240	301	273	2097
3	30	47	58	52	51	62	88	88	90	95	576
107	131	172	209	201	250	341	367	367	451	445	2927
DENMARK.											
..	4	15	18	21	14	18	28	28	28	34	180
FRANCE.											
159	189	216	187	200	210	231	243	297	306	2542	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	4	1	10	
159	189	216	187	200	210	231	248	301	307	2552	
GERMANY.											
162	155	139	131	147	188	179	200	189	218	2700	
2	45	48	44	70	81	98	111	147	181	827	
57	53	80	91	95	105	125	151	146	104	1010	
..	..	..	..	..	..	21	46	47	85	199	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	110	82	145	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	23	23	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
221	253	267	266	312	374	423	511	639	693	4954	
SWEDEN.											
41	51	42	31	47	51	49	51	54	56	630	
11	12	7	3	14	19	24	21	16	16	163	
52	63	49	34	61	70	73	72	70	72	793	
SWITZERLAND											
..	..	..	..	..	..	17	14	20	17	68	
39	41	40	44	64	69	82	81	116	127	795	
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	
39	41	40	44	64	69	99	95	136	144	863	

TABLE OF ANNUAL

No.	CITY.	Inaugu- rated.	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885
1	Milano	1876	2	9	14	25	49	70	67	44	91	70
2	Lodo	1877	..	6	2	2	5	5	2	2	2	1
3	Roma	1888	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	29	43
4	Cremona	1883	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	15	5
5	Brescia	1883	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	2	2
6	Padova	1884	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	5
7	Udine	1884	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	4
8	Varese	1884	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1
9	Spezia	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
10	Novara	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
11	Firenze	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
12	Livorno	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
13	Asti	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
14	Pisa	1885	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
15	Alessandria ..	1886	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
16	Como	1886	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
17	Torino	1887	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
18	Mantova	1887	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
19	S. Remo	1888	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
20	Verona	1888	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
21	Bologna	1889	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
22	Modena	1890	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
23	Venezia	1891	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
24	Spoleto	1894	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
25	Perugia	1895	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
26	Siena	1895	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
27	Brà	1897	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
			2	15	16	27	45	75	69	70	116	164

REMATIONS IN ITALY.

	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	Totals.
1	55	76	85	72	65	66	74	72	64	65	104	92	99	92	103	1647
4	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	2	52
2	33	59	90	74	47	75	55	61	54	49	37	29	55	52	59	941
5	9	10	10	5	8	4	3	4	7	3	3	2	3	6	1	124
5	4	3	2	2	4	1	1	3	2	1	1	3	3	2	4	50
5	4	7	5	6	4	3	8	3	3	4	2	3	4	1	6	77
5	..	4	2	3	2	6	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	6	2	49
5	5	..	5	..	1	2	1	..	1	3	3	2	2	..	..	28
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	8
5	2	1	3	1	..	7	1	3	1	1	1	2	4	..	..	30
5	26	18	21	20	16	24	18	19	24	11	14	13	14	17	16	301
5	20	10	20	26	9	16	16	11	9	24	9	13	13	14	..	231
5	4	3	3	2	3	4	..	2	..	1	..	4	..	1	2	30
5	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	4
5	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	..	1	1	3	2	1	1	..	28
5	1	3	2	8	1	7	6	7	3	1	2	2	6	10	2	72
5	1	18	12	10	28	14	22	21	11	22	17	28	14	19	23	260
5	1	1	2	1	3	4	8	3	4	..	3	2	4	1	2	39
5	..	5	10	10	9	9	4	7	5	5	11	6	6	6	9	105
5	..	3	2	2	2	1	..	3	1	..	3	1	1	1	..	20
5	..	..	2	10	12	5	11	3	11	14	20	19	26	22	21	176
5	..	..	..	2	1	4	1	2	3	3	..	3	1	4	2	26
5	..	..	..	..	1	7	5	5	5	3	7	4	4	2	7	50
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	4	2	2	3	4	6	27
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	2	1	..	..	..	6
5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	2
	168	227	282	258	221	262	246	228	220	229	242	241	255	262	274	4398

CHAPTER XV.

The Cremation Act 1902.

2 Edw. VII., cap. 8.

An Act for the Regulation of the Burning of Human Remains, and to enable Burial Authorities to establish Crematoria.

BE it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

1. This Act may be cited as the Cremation Act 1902.

2. In this Act—

The expression “burial authority” shall mean any burial board, any council, committee, or other local authority having the powers and duties of a burial board, and any local authority maintaining a cemetery under the Public Health (Interments) Act 1879, or under any local Act.

The expression “crematorium” shall mean any building fitted with appliances for the purpose of burning human remains, and shall include everything incidental or ancillary thereto.

3. In the application of this Act to Scotland—

The expression “burial authority” shall mean the parish council or town council of any parish or burgh, as the case may be, vested with the powers and duties conferred by the Burial Grounds (Scotland) Act 1855, or any Act amending the same ;

The expression “the Local Government Board” shall mean the Local Government Board for Scotland ;

The expression “Secretary of State” shall mean the Secretary for Scotland.

4. The powers of a burial authority to provide and maintain burial grounds or cemeteries, or anything essential, ancillary, or incidental thereto, shall be deemed to extend to and include the provision and maintenance of crematoria.

Provided that no human remains shall be burned in any such crematorium until the plans and site thereof have been approved by the Local Government Board, and until the crematorium has been certified by the burial authority to the Secretary of State to be complete, built in accordance with such plans, and properly equipped for the purpose of the disposal of human remains by burning.

5. No crematorium shall be constructed nearer to any dwelling-house than two hundred yards, except with the consent, in writing, of the owner, lessee, and occupier of such house, nor within fifty yards of any public highway, nor in the consecrated part of the burial ground of any burial authority.

6. A burial authority may accept a donation of land for the purpose of a crematorium, and a donation of money or other property for enabling them to acquire, construct, or maintain a crematorium.

7. The Secretary of State shall make regulations as to the maintenance and inspection of crematoria and prescribing in what cases and under what conditions the burning of any human remains may take place, and directing the disposition or interment of the ashes, and prescribing the forms of the notices, certificates, and declarations to be given or made before any such burning is permitted to take place, and such declarations shall be made under and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835, and also regulations as to the registration of such burnings as have taken place. A copy of such regulations shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament, if Parliament be then sitting, or, if not, then within three weeks after the beginning of the next ensuing Session of Parliament; and, after such regulations have lain for forty days before Parliament, then, unless within such forty days an address has been presented by one or other of the said Houses praying His Majesty to withhold his assent from such regulations or any part thereof, such

regulations shall have the same effect as if they were enacted in this Act. All statutory provisions relating to the destruction and falsification of registers of burials, and the admissibility of extracts therefrom as evidence in courts and otherwise, shall apply to the register of burnings directed by such regulations to be kept, and the Stamp Act, 1891, shall apply to a register under this Act as if it were a register of burials.

8. (1) Every person who shall contravene any such regulation as aforesaid, or shall knowingly carry out or procure or take part in the burning of any human remains except in accordance with such regulations and the provisions of this Act, shall (in addition to any liability or penalty which he may otherwise incur) be liable on summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds. Provided that any person aggrieved by any conviction may appeal therefrom to quarter sessions.

(2) Every person who shall wilfully make any false declaration or representation, or sign, or utter any false certificate, with a view to procuring the burning of any human remains, shall (in addition to any penalty or liability which he may otherwise incur) be liable to imprisonment with or without hard labour not exceeding two years.

(3) Every person who, with intent to conceal the commission or impede the prosecution of any offence, procures or attempts to procure the cremation of any body, or with such intent makes any declaration or gives any certificate under this Act, shall be liable to conviction on

indictment to penal servitude for a term not exceeding five years.

9. The burial authority may demand payment of any such charges or fees for the burning of human remains in any crematorium provided by them, as may be authorised by any table approved by the Local Government Board, and such charges or fees, and any other expenses properly incurred in or in connection with the cremation of a deceased person, shall be deemed to be part of the funeral expenses of the deceased.

10. Nothing in this Act shall interfere with the jurisdiction of any coroner under the Coroners Act 1887, or any Act amending the same, and nothing in this Act shall authorise the burial authority or any person to create or permit a nuisance.

11. The incumbent of any ecclesiastical parish shall not, with respect to his parishioners or persons dying in his parish, be under any obligation to perform a funeral service before, at, or after the cremation of their remains, within the ground of a burial authority; but, upon his refusal so to do, any clerk in holy orders of the Established Church not being prohibited under ecclesiastical censure, may, with the permission of the bishop and at the request of the executor of the deceased person, or of the burial authority, or other person having charge of the cremation or interment of the cremated remains, perform such service within such ground.

12. In any table of fees respecting burials to be made or approved by the Secretary of State,

a fee may be fixed in respect of a burial service before, at, or after cremation, and, if no fee is fixed, the fee, if any, fixed in respect of a burial service shall apply.

13. Sections fifty-two and fifty-seven of the Cemeteries Clauses Act 1847, and any similar provisions in any local and personal Act authorising the making of a cemetery, shall apply to the disposition or interment of the ashes of a cremated body as if it were the burial of a body.

14. As from the date at which regulations under this Act come into force, any provisions of any local and personal Act for the like purpose as this Act, and any byelaws or regulations made thereunder, shall, so far as they relate to that purpose, cease to be in operation.

15. This Act shall come into operation on the first day of April One thousand nine hundred and three.

16. This Act shall not apply to Ireland.









